
Chapter 8

PARTNERSHIPS



Figure 8.1: Volunteers clearing invasive species (courtesy Eva Webster 2006)

Introduction

The creation of this Resource Management Plan would not have been possible without partnerships. The RMP is a direct result of the cooperative efforts of public and private organizations and individuals working together toward a common goal. The RMP was funded through a partnership among the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) Office of Public Private Partnerships (OPPP) and private contributions from Waterworks Park, LLC and Boston College. The RMP process was also enriched by the knowledge of an existing network of non-profit groups and individuals dedicated to protecting the quality of life in and around the Reservation.

Creating the plan is a new beginning for the Chestnut Hill Reservation. There is a clear role for partners in implementing the recommendations of this plan and in providing long-term stewardship of Chestnut Hill Reservationⁱ. Like other great parks and the groups that support them - Prospect Park in Brooklyn; Piedmont Park in Atlanta; the Public Garden, Common, and Commonwealth Avenue in Boston; the Friends of Buttonwood Park, New Bedford; and the Charles River Conservancy in Boston and Cambridge - and public institutions like art museums and libraries, Chestnut Hill Reservation is worthy of private support to augment appropriate and adequate public funding.

The high level of public involvement in the development of this RMP sets the stage for public-private partnerships. This chapter outlines some of the ways that non-profit organizations, businesses, institutions and individuals can

contribute to the preservation of this vital community resource.

Partnerships for Parks

In their 2000 publication *Public Parks, Private Partners: How Partnerships are Revitalizing Urban Parks* the Project for Public Spaces, Inc.ⁱⁱ identifies nine categories of activities undertaken by nonprofit organizations in their support for a park. The categories came from a survey of two dozen non-profit park organizations funded through the Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds. They are:

- Fundraising
- Organizing volunteers
- Design, planning and construction of capital improvements
- Marketing and public outreach
- Programming
- Advocacy
- Remedial Maintenance
- Routine Maintenance
- Security

These partnership activities often grow out of a master plan or other park plan (such as an RMP) and require

close coordination, communication and cooperation with park staff. The following are specific activities that a non-profit, volunteer, institutional or business partner may undertake to partner with DCR at Chestnut Hill Reservation.

Partnership Opportunities at Chestnut Hill Reservation

1. Fundraising

This RMP has revealed a substantial gap between the DCR public resources currently available for the management of Chestnut Hill Reservation, and the level of resources needed to maximize the public benefit of this important open space. Private supplemental financial support is always welcome from non profit groups. Park partners at Chestnut Hill can use their tax exempt status to solicit donations from individuals and large foundations to partner with DCR. Fundraising is always an excellent way to promote the park, raise awareness of parks needs and goals.

a. Annual Operating Costs

Donations can be collected in the Chestnut Hill Reservation account of the DCR Urban Trust, an account not tied to the fiscal year budget from which park managers can draw for purchases of supplies, equipment, and other needs, and can establish a maintenance endowment for a specific place. Following the \$2+ million rehabilitation of the youth athletic fields at Teddy Ebersol's Red Sox Fields at Lederman Park on the Esplanade, Boston, through partnership among DCR, EOEA, The Red Sox Foundation, Hill House, and the Esplanade Association, the partners established a private endowment for its ongoing care to include private funds to augment DCR maintenance and operational monies. This protects the investment and insures the delivery of high quality public services into the future.

b. Capital Campaigns

Park partners can raise dedicated funds for a specific capital project identified in Chapter 7 of this RMP, or in the succeeding Vegetation Management Plan (VMP). Funds can be deposited into the CHR account of the DCR Urban Trust. A dollar-for-dollar match may also be available through the EOEA Office of Public Private Partnerships (OPPP) which solicits project proposals annually and provides state matching funds on a

competitive basis to match non-state funds. See OPPP Program description later in this chapter.

c. Memorial Bench Program

One of the community's higher priorities for Chestnut Hill was the installation of benches, particularly around the inner pathway. The addition of new benches, as well as the relocation or replacement of existing benches, is a compelling goal for a bench donation program. Similar to the programs at Brookline Reservoir and MWRA's program at Deer Island, a Memorial Bench Program would identify a bench type and locations and solicit private donations to fund the installation. A small plaque can be attached to the back of the bench in recognition of the donor. The Esplanade Association and DCR have coordinated on a highly successful bench donation program for the historic Esplanade.

d. Grants

Non-profit partner organizations may be eligible for grant funding that would not traditionally be available to DCR. DCR staff are available to assist in the preparation of grant applications, developing projects scopes, and general technical assistance.

2. Organizing Volunteers

Organizing volunteers is a familiar and beneficial activity for non profit groups. At Chestnut Hill Reservation, there is great potential for volunteer partners to augment, but not replace, existing DCR staff with volunteers for maintenance, staffing events and development of programs. Volunteer events serve to build community stewardship and increase public involvement, benefiting both the park and the non profit.

a. Maintenance

At Chestnut Hill Reservation, volunteer groups have been successfully providing remedial maintenance including weeding and general park clean up. The successful use of volunteer crews depends on proper training and adequate professional supervision. DCR staff often work with skilled community volunteers to identify appropriate volunteer projects and to organize and monitor these activities. Organizing an annual spring-clean up can help to jump start the season and provide extra hands when the park staffing is limited prior to hiring of seasonal staff.

A non-profit group might also hire a volunteer coordinator who can provide skills training for volunteer

activities under the supervision of DCR staff. The Charles River Conservancy and the Esplanade Association both fund volunteer coordinators who bring other partners to DCR parks.

b. Events

Chestnut Hill Reservation is a very popular open space, and there may be increasing demand for special events. Park partners can help DCR fund, plan and market these events and provide extra personnel during these activities.

c. Programs (visitor education and outreach)

DCR's Rangers organize interpretive programs at Chestnut Hill Reservation each year. With support from park partners these programs can be expanded to run more frequently, or to include more people. Non profit groups can also work with the DCR Rangers to create alternative curricula on ecology, history or engineering which can be implemented by both DCR staff and volunteer docents.

DCR has successfully partnered with Friends groups at the Boston Harbor Islands, Breakheart State Reservation and Neponset River Reservation for park programs.

3. Design, Planning and Construction of Capital Improvements

This RMP outlines a number of priority capital needs. The budgeting, design and implementation of those projects will likely occur over many years. Just as the RMP process has been enhanced by public participation, so will the process of planning and designing capital improvements. DCR's park partners will be encouraged to bring the perspective of the neighbor, park user and open space advocate to project planning and construction. Whether through simple public meetings or through formal agreements for funding initial capital investment and maintenance endowments, park partners can play a role in capital projects.

4. Marketing and Public Outreach

The development of the RMP for Chestnut Hill Reservation has raised awareness of the park through public meetings and press coverage. Park partners can build on this momentum through a website, newsletters, and postings at the park. At Chestnut Hill these marketing efforts can serve to build partnerships among the many

existing groups, bring in new members, and generally increase public involvement.

5. Programming

The Chestnut Hill Reservation park partners are park users, and have diverse ideas on how to create programs that effectively serve the park constituency. Partners working in close coordination with park rangers can identify themes for programs such as:

a. Recreation

Chestnut Hill Reservation has a large group of active walkers and joggers using the ~1.5 mile Reservoir path. This user base can be organized around a competitive race or charity walk. Non profits and other partners can help DCR develop these programs and provide supplemental staff during events.

b. Arts/Cultural Programming

Chestnut Hill Reservation does not currently have a formal performance space, and analysis shows that no new facilities for performances should be developed. If the Gatehouse #1 area is rehabilitated, the courtyard and steps could serve as a "stage." In addition, the Reservoir path might be suitable for "movable" performances or cultural activities similar to the annual Lantern Parade at Jamaica Pond. These types of cultural events can be replicated at Chestnut Hill Reservation, working through the DCR permit office to obtain a Special Permit.

c. Environmental Education

DCR's park partners have relationships to organizations and institutions that can provide educational programs on birds, plants, historic landscape, engineering and other topics at Chestnut Hill Reservation. The partners can be the liaison with the Commonwealth to bring these programs to the Reservation.

6. Advocacy

Non-profit groups, academic institutions, and park partners represent a broad constituency, whose combined voices can make a tremendous impact on the Reservation. Working with the media and elected and appointed leaders, non profits and neighborhood groups can promote the local perspective on park management, operational and capital needs, and increase awareness.

7. Remedial Maintenance

While many non-profit organizations are successful in raising awareness of capital needs and directing efforts toward specific projects, it is often the operational needs that are the most challenging. DCR's park partners can contribute toward regular maintenance at the Reservation in several ways.

a. Annual volunteer "clean up" day

As mentioned under "Organizing volunteers," volunteers can directly assist in the maintenance of Chestnut Hill Reservation.

b. Funding

Non profit organizations can raise funds to support the operations of Chestnut Hill Reservation. Contributions can be pooled into semi-annual donations to the Urban Trust. Park staff can then draw from the account for supplies, equipment and other needs.

c. Contracting for Services

In some cases, a park partner may have the capacity to support a contract for maintenance at Chestnut Hill Reservation. This might include mowing, path maintenance, and other cyclical maintenance activities.

8. Routine Maintenance

Currently routine maintenance at Chestnut Hill Reservation is the responsibility of DCR and MWRA as outlined in the 2002 joint agreement. However, there may be an opportunity to partner with surrounding institutions and property managers for lawn maintenance, trash removal, and other routine maintenance in abutting areas. There may also be an opportunity to create a reporting system by which park users can notify DCR of full trash receptacles, overgrown paths and other needs.

9. Security

At Chestnut Hill Reservation, visibility on pathways and clear entry and exit point have been identified as critical maintenance tasks, both of which will increase safety at the park. There are also programs in which park partners can participate to supplement security provided by DCR.

a. Park Watch Program

The Chestnut Hill RMP recommends the establishment of a Park Watch program at the reservation, through which

volunteers would work cooperatively with park rangers and police to recognize and report suspicious activity in and around park areas. The program would be modeled after DCR programs already in place at Blue Hills Reservation and Stony Brook Reservation. This program is similar to the "Ambassador Program" initiated by the Piedmont Park Conservancy in Atlanta, GA. That program trained seasonal staff to greet visitors and report incidents via radio to a full time security guard. Both programs are intended to improve the public perception of safety through increased visibility of personnel.

Guidelines for Partnerships at Chestnut Hill Reservation

This Resource Management Plan provides a framework for future decision-making and capital investment at Chestnut Hill Reservation, whether undertaken by the Commonwealth or through public-private partnerships. It is important that the relationship between DCR and its park partners also take place within a mutually understood framework. For all partnerships, the DCR West District Manager shall serve as the liaison between park partners and DCR, and the following guidelines shall apply. These Guidelines for Partnerships follow the EOEA OPPP "Guiding Principles for Public Private Partnerships."

- Partnership activities shall be subject to approval by DCR, and park partners shall pursue approvals well in advance of any activity. DCR shall respond to all requests for approval of partnership activities in a timely manner, promptly issuing any permits or licenses necessary to plan and execute the approved activity.
- Partnership activities shall provide a public benefit consistent with the management goals of Chestnut Hill Reservation as outlined in the CHR Resource Management Plan.
- Partnership activities shall take into account protection of natural, cultural and recreation resources.
- Partnership activities shall be compatible with and enhance the resources of Chestnut Hill Reservation.
- Partnership activities that could potentially increase maintenance and operational responsibilities will be evaluated based on the park/district capacity. Proposals for such activities should include provisions for meeting increased maintenance needs.

- Partnership activities shall provide maximum public access, use and enjoyment, including universal access as outlined in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
 - Partnership activities shall be consistent with existing park regulations.
 - Partnership activities that promote public understanding of the history of Chestnut Hill Reservoir and the surrounding park landscape are encouraged.
 - It is understood that partnership activities support DCR's management of Chestnut Hill Reservation and do not result in special access or ownership by private parties involved in the partnership.
- ⁱⁱ More information about Project for Public Spaces, including ordering information for *Public Parks*, *Private Partners* is available at www.pps.org. *Public Parks*, *Private Partners*, Project for Public Spaces, New York, 2000

1. Memorial Gift Policy

Projects involving donations under \$5,000 to the DCR Urban or Conservation Trusts must comply with the DCR Memorial Gift Policy.

Waterworks Community Benefits Funds and the OPPP “Fix It First” Program

As per the Land Disposition Agreement (LDA) for the sale of the Waterworks property to the developer, the developer of Waterworks Park has set aside \$900,000 of community benefit funds for improvements to the Reservation, which will be administered through the Boston Redevelopment Authority. These funds will be used to pay for the high priority capital projects identified in this RMP. In 2006 the Office of Public Private Partnerships provided \$150,000 to CHR as a match to these private funds.

For each project, DCR will coordinate a public process to solicit input on the scope or design of the project. DCR will design and bid the project, then submit a funding request to the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA). The first phase of projects will include removal of the fence, pathway rehabilitation, and stone wall repairs.

ⁱ DCR is preparing a technical bulletin on public private partnerships. *Terra Firma 4: Public/Private Partnerships Preserving Historic Landscapes in Massachusetts* will be available at www.mass.gov/dcr in late 2006.

